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Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 AID-05 XMB-02 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 OMB-01

/055 W
---------- 050408
P R 171217Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8084
INFO AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1437

CASABLANCA FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR EGEN GB
SUBJ: CIVAIR: EXPANSION OF AIR GABON

1. ON INSTRUCTIONS OF PRESIDENT, DIRECTEUR DE CABINET MAYILA REAFFIRMED TO ME JULY 17 GOG COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM AIR AFRIQUE AND EXPANSION OF AIR GABON TO INTERNATIONAL STATUS. MAYILA ALSO TRANSMITTED PRESIDENT'S DESIRE TO "ASSOCIATE U.S." WITH AIR GABON IN SIGNIFICANT WAY, BOTH THROUGH ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING AIRCRAFT AND PERHAPS THROUGH FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION IN AIR GABON BY PAN-AMERICAN OR OTHER U.S. AIRLINE.

2. IN REPLY, I INFORMED MAYILA THAT BOEING REPRESENTATIVE MAUGER EXPECTED RETURN TO LIBREVILLE AROUND END JULY WITH PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY AND OPTIONS PAPER, AND REIT-ERATED TO HIM WILLINGNESS OF EXIMBANK TO GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO PROPERLY-SUPPORTED REQUEST FOR FINANCING OF ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT. IN THIS REGARD, I DREW ON STATE 176332 TO SUGGEST POSSIBLE DESIRABILITY OF GOG EMPLOYING INDEPENDENT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSULTANT TO DETERMINE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF INDEPENDENT

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AIRLINE TO SUPPLEMENT BOEING STUDY. MAYILA AGREED IMMEDIATELY, AND ASKED IF WE COULD OBTAIN FOR GOG IDENTIFICATION OF CONTRACTOR WHO PREPARED SIMILAR STUDY FOR CAMEROON AIRLINES ALONG WITH INDICATION FROM THIS FIRM OF DELAYS AND COSTS INVOLVED IN STUDY FOR AIR GABON. (MAYILA NOTED THAT PARALLEL STUDIES DONE IN CAMEROON BY BOEING AND INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR HAD BEEN MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE AND ANTICIPATED SAME RESULTS IN CASE OF GABON.)

3. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY PAN-AMERICAN OR OTHER U.S. AIRLINES, I TOLD MAYILA THAT I COULD IN NO WAY SPEAK FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES INVOLVED BUT WONDERED ON PERSONAL BASIS WHETHER THEH WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HOLDING SHARES IN AIR GABON IN ABSENCE OF MANAGEMENT CONTRACT. I SUGGESTED THAT BEST ROUTE FOR EXPLORING PAN-AMERICAN INTEREST WAS PROBABLY THROUGH JOE GATT, WHOM GOG PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED DESIRE TO CONSULT IN ANY CASE, AND MAYILA SAID GABONESE WOULD SUGGEST GATT ACCOMPANY MOBUTU ON LATTER'S NEXT VISIT HERE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 29-30.

4. FOR DEPARTMENT: APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN OBTAINING INFO RE CONTRACTOR REQUESTED BY MAYILA, WHO INDICATED GOG PREPARED SIGN CONTRACT PROMPTLY FOR STUDY.

5. FOR KINSHASA: PLEASE PASS SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE TO GATT AND ASK HIM TO LET US KNOW THROUGH YOU WHEN HIS VISIT HERE IS SET.

6. FOR ROME: PLEASE PASS SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE TO JEAN-PAUL MAUGER AT BOEING INTERNATIONAL (TELEPHONE: 360-6641) AND ASK HIM TO ADVISE DATES FOR HIS RETURN VISIT SO WE CAN INFORM MAYILA. IF HE CAN BE HERE WITH PRELIMINARY STUDY AT TIME OF GATT VISIT, OVERLAP MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL.STEIGMAN

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